



Aggressive Driving

NETS 1998 Planner

AGGRESSIVE DRIVING

It's No Accident

It's early morning on a tree-lined parkway in Virginia. One car cuts off another and suddenly, a high-speed road duel ensues. Within minutes, a disastrous crash — and three people are dead. Three people who were on their way to work. These could have been your employees.

You and your employees know about aggressive driving. You see it as you commute to and from the office and meetings. Tailgating, speeding, sudden lane changing and rude gesturing have unfortunately become all too familiar. Just who are the aggressive drivers?

The AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety found that most perpetrators described in police and newspaper reports are usually males in their twenties, but we are all guilty of driving aggressively at times.

With an increase in daily stressors, including traffic congestion, it's easy for minor incidents to set us off and turn us into beastly drivers. How can you help your employees maintain self-control?

By using the materials and ideas in this planner, you will enable your employees to:

- realize that aggressive driving is not only unnecessary — it's dangerous;
- recognize and modify their own aggressive driving behavior;
- know what to do when encountering an aggressive driver;
- learn to drive more courteously; and
- become good driver role models.

You can help prevent countless unnecessary injuries and fatalities caused by crashes involving aggressive driving. By using this planner, you will not only improve the safety of your employees when they are out on the road, but you will also save your company from the enormous emotional and financial losses that result from on- and off-the-job employee crashes. So start using the materials provided in this kit and put your plans into action — for safety's sake!

If you have any questions, or if you have suggestions for future planners, please contact your state coordinator, the NETS National staff at 202-452-6005, or visit the NETS website at www.trafficsafety.org.

PUT YOUR SAFE DRIVING IDEAS ON THE INFORMATION HIGHWAY.

Please take a moment to tell us about the traffic safety programs or policies that your company has instituted, or any great ideas that you may have on improving roadway safety for your employees.

Simply fax us at **(202) 223-7012** or e-mail us at nets@trafficsafety.org.

We will select the best policies, programs and ideas from the responses received and post them on our website.



Studies show it takes less than 1.25 seconds to realize the person you just flipped off is your boss.

You never know who's behind the wheel or how they may retaliate. So practice your best office manners on the road – no matter what the other guy does.



Studies show it takes less than 1.25 seconds to realize the person you just flipped off is your boss.

You never know who's behind the wheel or how they may retaliate. So practice your best office manners on the road – no matter what the other guy does.



3" X 6" PAYCHECK STUFFER



Studies show it takes less than 1.25 seconds to realize the person you just flipped off is your boss.

You never know who's behind the wheel or how they may retaliate. So practice your best office manners on the road – no matter what the other guy does.



3.625" X 6" AD



Studies show it takes less than 1.25 seconds to realize the person you just flipped off is your boss.

You never know who's behind the wheel, so practice your best office manners on the road.



3.625" X 3.625" AD

AGGRESSIVE DRIVER SELF-TEST

Below are 20 items listed in escalating degrees of driver hostility, beginning with milder forms of aggression (step 1) and going all the way to ultimate violence (step 20).

How far down the uncivilized road will you allow yourself to go when you are behind the wheel? Take this test and determine if you fit into a zone of aggressiveness.

1. Mentally condemning other drivers.
2. Verbally denigrating other drivers to a passenger in your vehicle.
3. Closing ranks to deny someone entering your lane because you're frustrated or upset.
4. Giving another driver the "stink eye" to show your disapproval.
5. Speeding past another car or revving up the engine as a sign of protest.
6. Preventing another driver from passing because you're mad.
7. Tailgating to pressure a driver to go faster or get out of the way.
8. Fantasizing physical violence against another driver.
9. Honking or yelling at someone through the window to indicate displeasure.
10. Making a visible obscene gesture at another driver.
11. Using your car to retaliate by making sudden, threatening maneuvers.
12. Pursuing another car in chase because of a provocation or insult.
13. Getting out of the car and engaging in a verbal dispute, on a street or parking lot.
14. Carrying a weapon in the car in case you decide to use it in a driving incident.
15. Deliberately bumping or ramming another car in anger.
16. Trying to run another car off the road to punish the driver.
17. Getting out of the car and beating or battering someone as a result of a road exchange.
18. Trying to run someone down whose actions angered you.
19. Shooting at another car.
20. Killing someone.

Which zone are you in?

Unfriendly Zone - steps 1 to 3

Hostile Zone - steps 4 to 7

Violent Zone - steps 8 to 11

Lesser Mayhem Zone - steps 12 to 16

Major Mayhem Zone - steps 17 to 20.

If you need help getting out of your zone, ask your employer for information or visit these websites:

Network of Employers for Traffic Safety at www.trafficsafety.org

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration at www.nhtsa.dot.gov

This test is provided by Dr. Leon James, Professor of Psychology at the University of Hawaii.

DON'T BE AN AGGRESSIVE DRIVER.

Take Your Good Office Manners On The Road.

You're walking along a crowded sidewalk. Someone in front of you is moving slowly and you're in a hurry. Do you scream at them to get out of the way? Follow within inches of their heels until they move aside? Dart around them without warning and immediately slow down in front of them? Odds are, you'd simply wait for a break in the crowd and step around them. Why, then, don't we behave as courteously when we're driving?

Inside our cars, under the cloak of anonymity, we're different. We yell, make rude gestures, blast our horns, flash our high beams, and sometimes make risky maneuvers just to teach someone a lesson. Our behavior becomes beastly — and that's when disaster can occur.

In the suburbs of Washington, D.C., three people were killed during the morning commute. One car cut off another and a speed duel ensued, resulting in a terrible crash. Two of the victims were not even involved in the duel. They were on the other side of the road.

A recent study of Washington, D.C. area drivers showed that more people feel threatened by aggressive drivers than by drunk drivers! What causes this dangerous behavior?

Aggressive driving doesn't just happen. It's the result of a buildup of stressors. We're late for a meeting. We had a bad day at work. We're in a rush to pick up our kids at day care. We're stuck in traffic. All this leads to stress and frustration and even the politest person can become possessed! What can you do to keep yourself — and your car — under control? Here are a few ideas:

Drive courteously! Signal when you want to turn or change lanes. Use your horn sensibly. Don't swerve between lanes, tailgate or speed. Give a friendly wave when someone allows you to merge.

Be tolerant. Remember that other drivers feel stressed, too, and may sometimes exhibit rude behavior. Avoid reaction. Don't let the poor behavior of others affect your skills as a courteous driver.

Allow plenty of time for your trip. Instead of trying to "make good time," try to "make time good."

Make your car a peaceful place. Keep tapes or CDs of soothing music on hand for a relaxing ride.

Avoid the frustration of unexpected mechanical troubles by getting your vehicle serviced regularly.

Remember that driving is not a contest.

Always share the road with pedestrians and bicyclists.

Don't let the beast in your car. Before you start your car, take a minute to relax, let go of stress, and concentrate on the job at hand — driving.

Lead by example. Ensure that the roads of tomorrow will be filled with friendly drivers. Set a good example for your kids.

The best way to tame the beast is not to be one in the first place. Stay calm, stay cool and treat people on the road the same way you would in person — with courtesy!

WHAT TO DO IF YOU ENCOUNTER AN AGGRESSIVE DRIVER

1. Take a deep breath.
2. Do not respond with a counterattack.
3. Safely move out of the aggressive driver's way.
4. Avoid eye contact.
5. Ignore gestures and don't return them.
6. Do not challenge an aggressive driver by speeding up, slowing down or swerving suddenly.
7. Do not fight over a parking spot. Let the other driver have it. It's not worth risking your life.
8. Get the license number of the offender and report the incident to the authorities.
9. If an aggressive driver is following you, do not drive home and do not get out of your car. Drive to a police station or a busy public place.
10. If an aggressive driver is involved in a crash farther down the road, stop at a safe distance from the crash scene, wait for the police to arrive, and report the driving behavior that you witnessed.

IDEAS TO TRY

- Invite local law enforcement officers to talk to your employees about the dangers of aggressive driving. Ask them to bring along victims or the family members of victims of aggressive driving to tell their story. Personal accounts can have a dramatic impact on your employees by illustrating the real life potential consequences of aggressive driving.
- Create courteous driving pledge cards for your employees. Once signed, these can be used as raffle entries for prizes like an afternoon off or a free lunch.
- Invite your employees' children to enter a "Friendly Driver" poster contest. Have the children submit drawings and create a display featuring the winning submissions.
- Create stickers for employees to place in their cars or on mobile phones which encourage them to report aggressive drivers. The stickers should include the local law enforcement phone number, along with instructions to provide the offender's vehicle description, license plate number and the location and direction of travel.
- Let your community know you care about safety and promote your company at the same time. Sponsor the morning or evening traffic report on your local radio station and have the station include in your acknowledgment a reminder to drive courteously.
- Encourage upper management to create a policy to accommodate parents who feel they need to rush to pick up children at day care to avoid late charges (i.e., if your company requires an employee to stay past his or her normal departure time, reimburse them for the resulting day care late charges).
- Hold a courteous driver contest. Invite employees to submit stories of encounters with aggressive drivers where courteous driving paid off. Present the winners with an award and showcase the winning stories in your employee newsletter.



